DARK HORSE COMICS

ROBERT E. HOWARD'S IRONHAND OF ALMURIC™

2 OF 4

$2.00 U.S.,
$2.50 CANADA.

ROY THOMAS AND MARK WINCHELL

IRONHAND OF ALMURIC™

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Robert E. Howard's IRONHAND OF ALMURIC #2 (of 4) October 1991. Published by Dark Horse Comics, Inc. 10956 SE Main St., Milwaukie, Oregon, USA 97222. Copyright © 1991 Roy Thomas. All rights reserved. Almuric™ is a trademark of Glenn Lord. Used by exclusive license. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, by any means, without the express permission of the copyright holder(s). The characters in this story are fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.
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INTER-SPECIAL TRANSMISSION BY ESAU CAIRN: THE PEOPLE OF KOTH DO NOT BURY THEIR DEAD, NOR DO THEY BURN THEM.
INSTEAD, FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS, THEY EXPOSE THE CORPSES ATOP STONE MONOLITHS A RESPECTFUL DISTANCE FROM THE CITY.
FOR THE MOST PART, THIS MERELY PROVIDES A FEAST FOR ALMURIC'S HUGE VULTURES...
HYIP HYIP HYIP
...WHILE ITS ALMOST CATLIKE HYENAS LEAP AND LUNGE BELOW.
GENERALLY, THEY ARE CONTENT WITH BITS OF BONE AND SCRAP WHICH THE BUZZARDS' RAVENING BEAKS PUSH OVER THE EDGE.
HYIP
HYIP
THAT NIGHT, HOWEVER...
...THEY WOULD FEAST ONLY ON HARDER RATIONS.
HROOO?
ON YOUR WAY, DOGS--
RRRRRRR

CHAPTER II
BEYOND THE GIRDLE
THIS PLACE IS MINE!
RRRRRR

THE HYENAS ON THIS WORLD ARE FAR STRONGER AND FIERCER THAN THEIR EARTHLY COUNTERPARTS...
RRRRRRR
...AND THE FOREMOST OF THOSE MEANT TO MAKE A MEAL OF ME.
FORTUNATELY, IT HAD MORE COURAGE...
YYYY
...THAN BRAINS.
SO, WHEN THE OTHERS CHARGED ME, FROTHING--
HRRR
---I WAS READY--
3

--WITH SOMETHING FAR HEAVIER THAN A ROCK.
THE FORCE OF MY THROW BROKE THE NECK OF ONE OF THE HYENAS.
HYAA
THERE WERE STILL A FEW ADVANTAGES TO BEING THE STRONGEST MAN ON AN ENTIRE PLANET.
ONLY TWO REMAINED, AND THEY WERE BEGINNING TO THINK BETTER OF ATTACKING ME...
BUT I DIDN'T INTEND TO GIVE THEM THE CHANCE.
ONE DOWN...
...AND ONE...
...TO GO!

IT WAS NOT BLOODLUST WHICH MADE ME SLAY THE BEASTS, RATHER THAN ALLOW THEM TO FLEE.
I HAD COME HERE TO CLIMB THIS MONOLITH...
...AND I DIDN'T WANT A SHARP-FANGED CARNIVORE SNAPPING AT MY BACKSIDE WHILE I DID.
MY HEART WAS BEATING QUICKLY WHEN I REACH THE TOP, AND NOT FROM ANY DIFFICULTY OF THE ASCENT.
I HAD CHOSEN THIS ONE BECAUSE IT'S HERE I SAW A VULTURE FLUTTERING ITS GREAT WINGS...
...WHICH MEANT THAT THE NEWEST KOTHAN DEAD MUST BE UP HERE.
ALL ALONG, I HAD WANTED TO BELIEVE--I HAD HAD TO BELIEVE--THAT MY DEAR WIFE ALTHA WASN'T THE ONE LYING ATOP THAT PILLAR.
BUT, EVEN BEFORE I HURLED MYSELF ONTO ITS FLAT EXPANSE--
--I KNEW THAT SHE WAS.
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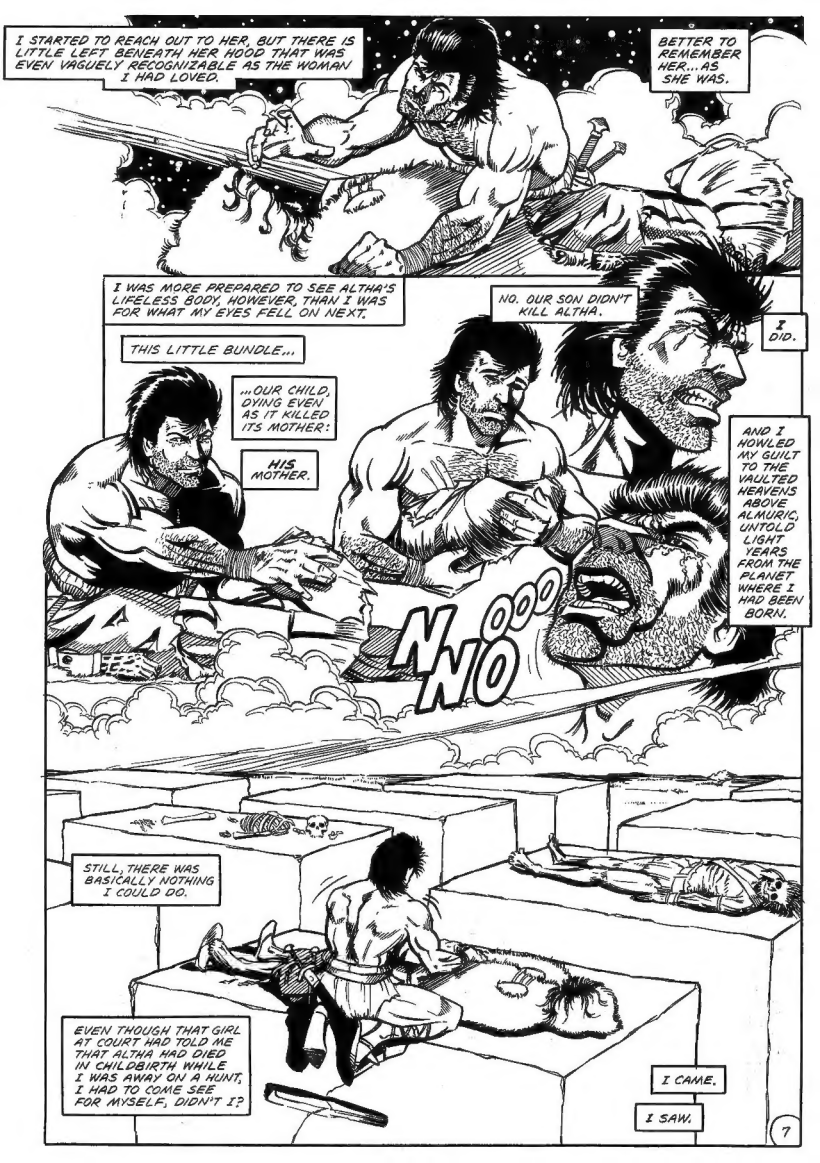
THE VULTURE FEASTING THERE DID NOT READILY RELINQUISH HIS BANQUET.
SKWAWWW
YOU SLIMY BASTARD--
PROBABLY HE'D FED HERE A HUNDRED TIMES, AND NO ONE HAD EVER CHALLENGED HIM BEFORE.
BUT THIS TIME WAS DIFFERENT.
THAT'S MY WIFE YOU'RE SINKING YOUR BLOODY BEAK INTO--
SKRREEEEEEEEE
THAT WAS ALTHA, DO YOU HEAR ME--
EEEEK!
SNAP!
--ALTHA.
THAT WAS--
6


I STARTED TO REACH OUT TO HER, BUT THERE IS LITTLE LEFT BENEATH HER HOOD THAT WAS EVEN VAGUELY RECOGNIZABLE AS THE WOMAN I HAD LOVED.
BETTER TO REMEMBER HER... AS SHE WAS.
I WAS MORE PREPARED TO SEE ALTHA'S LIFELESS BODY, HOWEVER, THAN I WAS FOR WHAT MY EYES FELL ON NEXT.
NO. OUR SON DIDN'T KILL ALTHA.
I DID.
THIS LITTLE BUNDLE...
...OUR CHILD, DYING EVEN AS IT KILLED ITS MOTHER:
HIS MOTHER.
AND I HOWLED MY GUILT TO THE VAULTED HEAVENS ABOVE ALMURIC, UNTOLD LIGHT YEARS FROM THE PLANET WHERE I HAD BEEN BORN.
NNOOOO
STILL, THERE WAS BASICALLY NOTHING I COULD DO.
EVEN THOUGH THAT GIRL AT COURT HAD TOLD ME THAT ALTHA HAD DIED IN CHILDBIRTH WHILE I WAS AWAY ON A HUNT, I HAD TO COME SEE FOR MYSELF, DIDN'T I?
I CAME.
I SAW.

AND I WALKED AWAY.
SUDDENLY, MY LEGS GAVE WAY BENEATH ME.
I SANK TO MY KNEES.
AWAY FROM THE DEATH STONES.
AWAY FROM KOTH, WHERE THE USURPER KHOSSUTH NOW SAT THE THRONE THAT HAD RECENTLY BEEN MINE.
...AND AGAIN I GAVE VENT TO MY ANGUISH.
I HAD LEFT ANY GOD I MIGHT EVER HAVE BELIEVED IN BACK ON EARTH...
WHY??
THERE WAS NO ANSWER.
AND WHY SHOULD THERE HAVE BEEN?
THAK, GOD OF ALMURIC, WAS NOT MY GOD.
...AND NOW THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT FOR ME TO DO...
...EXCEPT WHAT I'D ALWAYS KNOWN I WAS GOING TO DO, IF THE BODY ATOP THE PILLARS WAS REALLY ALTHA'S.
THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE SWORD...
...SHOULD PERISH BY THE SWORD...
...EVEN ON A WORLD THAT NEVER HEARD OF THE MAN WHO FIRST UTTERED THOSE WORDS.

AND THEN--
HELP--!
--A WOMAN'S CRY PULLED ME BACK, LIKE STRONG HANDS, FROM THE CLIFF'S EDGE OF DEATH.
BEFORE I KNOCKED A FEW APELIKE HEADS TOGETHER, THE MEN OF KOTH TREATED THEIR FEMALES LIKE CHATTEL TO BE ABUSED AT WILL--
HELLLP MEEEE
--AND THIS BUNCH, WHICH PURSUED THEIR QUARRY AWAY FROM THE CITY'S WALLS, WERE A THROWBACK TO THAT RECENT AND MORE BARBARIC TIME.
NOT FAR FROM THE DEATH-PILLARS, THE GIRL STUMBLED...
PLEASE-- DON'T--!
I'LL COME BACK WITH YOU...
KING KHOSSUTH DOESN'T WANT YOU BACK, BITCH.
HE WANTS YOU DEAD...

...SO...
URRGK
IRONHAND--!?
I RECOGNIZED THE MAN: CHABBA, A GUARD AT KHOSSUTH NEW "COURT."
STILL, HE HAD ONCE SEEMED LOYAL TO ME, AND HAD EATEN AT MY TABLE...
...SO I MAY HAVE HESITATED A MOMENT AS I GRASPED HIS NECK AND SHOULDER...
NNGGN--!
...WITH THE RESULT THAT I LEFT HIS ELBOW FREE.
HMMF!
BKOW
YOU GREW WEAK AND FLABBY AS OUR KING, IRONHAND--
--AND I'VE LONG WONDERED IF I COULD KILL YOU WITH MY BARE HANDS.
IT WAS GOOD TO HEAR HIM SAY THAT.

HIS WORDS WIPED ALL STAIN OF GUILT FROM MY HEART--
--LEAVING ONLY THE RAGE I FELT--
--RAGE STILL DIRECTED MOSTLY AT MYSELF--
--BUT WHICH I NOW TURNED FIERCELY ON CHABBA--
RRRRG--
--UNTIL THE SHARP SNAP OF A SPLINTERING SPINE TOLD ME THAT CHABBA WOULD NEVER SIT AT ANYONE'S TABLE, EVER AGAIN.
I LEFT HIM AS AN AFTER-FEAST FOR THE VULTURES.
THOSE SAME VULTURES WHO EVEN NOW WERE--
NOW, WOMAN--
PLEASE-- DON'T HURT ME, ESAU CAIRN!
I-- I NEVER DID ANYTHING TO HURT YOU-- OR TO YOUR ALTHA--!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I NEVER SAW YOU BEFORE IN MY--
WAIT A MINUTE! I DO KNOW YOU...

YOU'RE THE GIRL WHO TOLD ME ALTHA WAS DEAD.
MY NAME... IS WYNNEA.
AS MY COPPER SKIN BETRAYS, I'M ONE OF THOSE SLAVES YOU RESCUED FROM THE WINGED YAGAS, BEYOND THE GIRDLE.
THAT'S ANCIENT HISTORY.
WHY DID YOU FLEE, WITH KHOSSUTH'S HOUNDS AT YOUR HEELS?
YOU DIDN'T SEEM THAT DISCONTENT AT HIS COURT, DESPITE YOUR TINY GOLDEN CHAINS.
YOU SAW ONLY MY FACE, NOT MY HEART.
IN MY OWN WAY, I WAS AS MUCH AN ALIEN IN KOTH AS YOU WERE.
KHOSSUTH HAS OFTEN... ABUSED ME.
I DECIDED THAT EVEN LIFE BACK BEYOND THE GIRDLE WOULD BE BETTER, NOW THAT YOU WERE DEPOSED.
HOW DID YOU MEAN TO SCALE THAT SHEER ROCK WALL--WHEN I LOST AN ARMY TRYING TO DO THAT VERY THING?
THERE IS ANOTHER WAY, NOT EVEN KNOWN TO MOST OF THE OTHER CAPTIVES YOU LIBERATED FROM YUGGA.
I KNOW IT, THOUGH, AND I MEAN TO USE IT--IF YOU WILL LET ME GO.
BUT I WON'T.
WHAT? Y-YOU WOULD FORCE ME EITHER TO RETURN TO CERTAIN DEATH IN KOTH--
--OR WANDER THE FACE OF ALMURIC, TILL SOME WILD BEAST DEVOURS ME?
SURELY YOU WOULDN'T--
I SAID I WON'T LET YOU GO...
...BECAUSE I'M GOING WITH YOU.
I WAS HOPING YOU'D SAY THAT, IRONHAND.
PERHAPS, WITH YOU AT MY SIDE--I EVEN HAVE A CHANCE OF REACHING MY HOMELAND ALIVE!
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AND SO, TOGETHER, WE HEADED SOUTH.
TO AVOID ANY OF KHOSSUTH'S MEN, WE TOOK AN INDIRECT COURSE...
...A PATH WHICH TOOK US ACROSS VARIOUS TYPES OF TERRAIN, BOTH ROCKY PLAINS...
...AND STEAMING JUNGLES...
AT LAST, SOME WEEKS LATER, WE STOOD WITHIN SIGHT OF THE GIRDLE...
...AT A POINT MANY MILES FROM WHERE MY MEN HAD BEEN SLAUGHTERED BENEATH THE MALEVOLENT IMAGE OF PROF. AVERY HILDEBRAND.
THERE IS A WAY, ESAU CAIRN.
WHAT? THAT GENTLE STREAM THAT FLOWS INTO THE EARTH?
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL?
"PULL"? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. DOES THAT MEAN SOMETHING, IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE PLACE YOU CAME FROM?
IT MEANS THAT I STILL HAVE NO PARTICULAR REASON TO TRUST YOU.
YOU WANT TO GET BACK HOME.
HOW DO I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T LEAVE ME BEHIND, THE MOMENT YOU HAD THE CHANCE?

IS IT REALLY THAT YOU MISTRUST ME--
--OR IS THE GREAT IRONHAND MERELY AFRAID?
WATCH YOUR TONGUE, GIRL, OR SO HELP ME I'LL--
COME BACK HERE!
THE WATER WAS CRYSTAL CLEAR, AS ARE MANY STREAMS ON ALMURIC...
YET STRONG, HIDDEN CURRENTS BENEATH THE SURFACE SWIFTLY DREW ME ALONG, AGAINST MY WILL...
...TILL I REALIZED I WAS FAR FROM THE POINT WHERE I HAD DIVED IN...
...WITH ONLY JAGGED ROCK DIRECTLY ABOVE ME.
AND WHERE WAS THE COPPER GIRL?
HAD MY ANGRY OUTBURST BEEN RIGHT, AFTER ALL, AND SHE HAD FLED FROM ME?
LORD, IF ONLY I NOW HAD MY HANDS AROUND HER NECK...!
AND THEN, WITH MY LUNGS NEAR TO BURSTING...
...I SAW HER.
SHE BOBBED THERE IN THE WATER, LIKE SOME MERMAID OUT OF EARTH-MYTH.
SHE DIDN'T SEEM TO BE SHORT ON AIR, AT ALL.
AND SHE GESTURED ME TO HER, IN AN ALMOST PROVOCATIVE WAY...

WHEN SHE TURNED AND STREAKED STRAIGHT UPWARD, I FOLLOWED HER LIKE A SHOT.
ONLY AS I NEARED THE ROCK ABOVE DID I SEE A SHADOWY PATH THAT SEEMED LIKE A CREVICE.
...AND BURST INTO A GREAT UNDERGROUND CAVERN, LIT BY SOME WEIRD PHOSPHORESCENT GLOW.
YOU CERTAINLY TOOK YOUR TIME.
MY LUNGS WERE ON FIRE AS I MADE FOR IT...
DON'T-- MOCK ME-- GIRL!
HOW DID YOU-- KNOW OF THIS PLACE?
HAVE YOU BEEN-- HERE BEFORE?
NO. IT HAS BEEN A SECRET AMONG MY PEOPLE...
...PASSED DOWN ONLY BY OUR SHAMANS WHOSE ANCESTORS MADE THE JOURNEY YEARS AGO.
HOW DID YOU TALK ONE OF YOUR SHAMANS-- OUT OF HIS SECRETS?
SHAMANS ARE, AFTER ALL MEN...
...AND I'M A GIRL, IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED.
I... HAD.

IT WAS NO TRICK TO WHEEDLE MORE SECRETS THAN THAT OUT OF AN OLD MAN WHO HADN'T HAD A WOMAN IN YEARS.
UNFORTUNATELY, SOON AFTERWARD, I WAS CAPTURED BY THE YAGAS, AND TAKEN TO THE ROCK YUTHLA AS A SLAVE.
I'M GLAD I DID.
BUT YOU FREED ME... ONE AMONG MANY.
AND YET-- I KEEP WONDERING WHY YOU CAME WITH ME.
YOU'VE TOLD ME YOU WERE ON THE VERGE OF TAKING YOUR OWN LIFE WHEN YOU HEARD MY CRY FOR HELP.
BUT YOU'VE NEVER SAID WHY YOU WENT TO THE RESCUE OF A GIRL YOU DIDN'T KNOW.
SEEING YOU RUNNING FOR YOUR LIFE REMINDED ME THAT SOME PEOPLE VALUED LIFE, EVEN AS I WAS ABOUT TO REJECT IT.
PERHAPS ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE GIRDLE I WILL FIND AN ALLY, OR AT LEAST A WEAPON, WHICH WILL HELP ME KILL KHOSSUTH SKULL-SPLITTER.
I SHOULD TAKE MY REVENGE BEFORE I DIE-- OR ELSE KHOSSUTH WINS.
AND, ON EITHER WORLD I'VE KNOWN, I NEVER LIKED TO LOSE.
I'M GLAD YOU DIDN'T KILL YOURSELF, ESAU CAIRN.
WE SHOULD LIE DOWN HERE A WHILE AND REST.
THERE ARE SEVERAL UNDERWATER CAVERNS TO REACH IN THE SAME MANNER, BEFORE WE REACH THE FAR SIDE OF THE GIRDLE.
THEN, BY ALL MEANS... WYNNEA...
...LET'S LIE DOWN.../

SOME HOURS LATER, WE WERE ON OUR WAY AGAIN.
AS TO HOW FAR WE WOULD HAVE TO SWIM TO REACH THE NEXT RESPITE--AND AIR--WYNNEA HAD ONLY RITUAL WORDS OF A LOVE-STARVED SHAMAN TO GO BY.
WE PRAYED THAT HE HADN'T GOTTEN ANYTHING TURNED AROUND.
BUT AGAIN, WE REACHED A SUBTERRANEAN CAVE...
...AND TOOK OUR LEISURE.
FINALLY, AFTER SEVERAL SUCH SHORT SPURTS OF DESPERATE ENERGY, FAR FROM THE SUN,
...WE WERE THERE.
SO THIS IS WHAT THE GIRDLE LOOKS LIKE FROM THE FAR SIDE.
VERY MUCH AS THE ONE FROM WHICH WE CAME.
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?
TO ME, AT LEAST IT'S THAT MUCH CLOSER HOME.
...ASSUMING ANYONE STILL REMEMBERS ME THERE, AFTER SEVERAL YEARS IN CAPTIVITY.

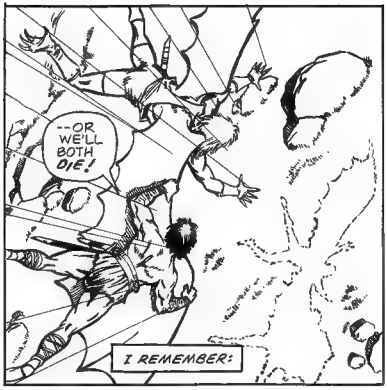
SO WHERE IS YOUR VILLAGE? YOU NEVER SAID.
IT'S SOME DAYS AWAY, BUT WE CAN--
GREETINGS!
WHAT--?
UP THERE--!
IT'S A YAGA!
BUT-- THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
THE LAST OF THEM DIED ON THE ROCK CALLED YUTHLA...
SO I THOUGHT, AS WELL.
ARE YOU TWO AS DEAF AS THE GREAT WHITE WORM?
I GAVE YOU WELCOME...
...ESAU CAIRN.

DAMN YOU--
HOW DID YOU KNOW MY NAME, YAGA?
SHE TOLD ME.
SHE?
WHO IS "SHE"?
WHY, MY MOTHER, OF COURSE...
...QUEEN YASMEENA OF YUGGA!
IMPOSSIBLE! I SAW YASMEENA KILLED BY THE GIANT FIRESLUG SHE'D UNLEASHED.
ITS EMBRACE DRAINED HER OF HER BLUE FLESH, AND LEFT HER A LIFELESS SKELETON--
--AND THE LAST OF HER KIND PERISHED WHEN THEIR CITADEL EXPLODED!
DO I LOOK DEAD?
AS FOR OUR QUEEN--THE CONDITION YOU SAW WAS ONLY A TEMPORARY ONE.
SHE WAS RECOVERED FULLY... AND SENT ME, EACH DAY, TO WAIT AT THIS POINT...
...THINKING YOU WOULD SOONER OR LATER FIND YOUR WAY HERE.
AND THE GIRL HERE HAS NO PART OF THIS?
WE YAGAS NEED NO HELP FROM GURAS.
OH, AND THERE WAS ONE OTHER THING MY QUEEN-MOTHER BADE ME DO WHEN YOU ARRIVED.
WHAT WAS THAT?
:HE SAID--TO KILL YOU!

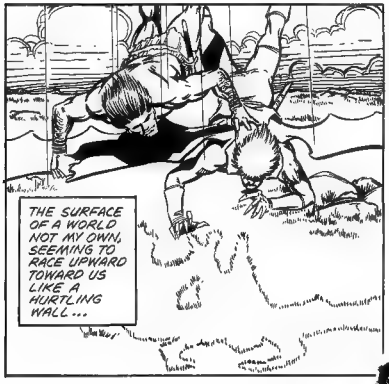
BY THE LAND OF ICE AND SNOW!
KTANNG
WATCH OUT!
DON'T WORRY, WYNNEA--
--I'VE GOT HIM--
--AND IF HE DOESN'T STOP STRUGGLING, I'LL BREAK HIS NECK!
AAGGK--!
WHAT THE HELL--?
ESAU--!

DOWN, YOU SKY-BLUE PIECE OF FILTH, OR I'LL--
ARRRHH--!
BY GOD, YOU CLAW AT ME AGAIN, AND I'LL BASH YOUR BRAINS IN--
--EVEN IF IT SENDS US BOTH TO OUR DOOM!
THAT'S BETTER.
YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST YAGA I'VE HITCHED A RIDE WITH, SO DON'T THINK YOU CAN--

THE YAGAS YOU RODE WERE CLEARLY NOT MY EQUAL, ESAU CAIRN!
HOLY--!
WHEN I WAS TRANSPORTED TO ALMURIC, IT WAS IN THE BLINKING OF AN EYE.
WHEN I FELL TUMBLING THROUGH THE SKY OFF THE YAGA'S BACK--
--IT SEEMED AN ETERNITY--
--AND NOT ONLY TO ME.
THEN--
--A DESPERATE GRAB--
--MORE LUCK THAN SKILL, I'LL ADMIT--
--BUT PERHAPS NOT ENOUGH OF EITHER.
YOU'RE-- TOO HEAVY--
I CAN'T-- HOLD US UP!
LET GO--!
WE'LL BOTH GO TO GROUND SAFELY, BY GOD--


--OR WE'LL BOTH DIE!
I REMEMBER:

A FLEETING GLIMPSE OF WYNNEA, HER FACE TURNED SKYWARD IN STARK FEAR...


THE SURFACE OF A WORLD NOT MY OWN, SEEMING TO RACE UPWARD TOWARD US LIKE A HURTLING WALL...

I EVEN THINK I REMEMBER WYNNEA'S SCREAM.
NOOOO

DON'T... WORRY... GIRL...

...I MADE SURE... HE WOUND UP... ON THE BOTTOM.
BUT--YOU'RE STILL HURT--?
AND YOUR FACE--
EVERY BONE--IN MY BODY--BUT I DOUBT IF ANYTHING IS BROKEN.
IT'S NOT AS BAD... AS IT LOOKS.
I HOPE I CAN SAY THE SAME OF THAT DARKENING SKY, WHICH LOOKS ALL SET TO STORM.
THOSE ROCKS YONDER SHOULD SHELTER US, THOUGH.
I'LL ADMIT--AFTER THAT, I COULD USE A BIT OF REST.
REAL REST, THIS TIME.
YOUR VILLAGE IS A FEW DAYS AWAY, YOU SAY?
YES, BUT WE'LL START HERE TOMORROW.
BUT I WARN YOU--THEY KNOW NOTHING OF "IRONHAND OF KOTH," AND ARE EVERY BIT AS WARLIKE AS THE GURA CITIES NORTH OF THE GIRDLE WERE, BEFORE YOU FORCED PEACE AND UNITY ON THEM.
WELL... IN THAT CASE...
...I MAY JUST HAVE TO START MY CAREER AS PEACEMAKER OF ALMURIC... ALL OVER AGAIN... HERE IN THE SOUTH.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT, WYNNEA?
WHAT?
I MIGHT JUST GET TO LIKE IT...!
NEXT:
INTO THE LAIR OF THE ANCIENTS
24

Flogging a Dead Horse

Wow! Where to begin? It's been 9 days since we said goodbye to sunny San Diego and *the* most impressive, hectic, and pulse-pounding convention I've ever attended. 1991's **San Diego Comic Book Convention** was a total blast, with a record 15,000 attendees through the doors in four days. The guest list was incredible, featuring just about every major talent in the business including **Will Eisner, Frank Miller, Clive Barker, Chris Claremont, Mark Schultz, Sergio Aragones, Jim Lee, Geof Darrow, Grant Morrison, Dan Barry, Kevin Eastman, Harlan Ellison, Dave Gibbons, Steve Rude, Moebius, Marc Silvestri, Walt Simonson,** and on, and on!

This year the traditionally quieter opening Thursday was jam-packed due to its being the Fourth of July and everyone's having the day off. The larger crowd was easily accommodated by the brand spanking new convention center the show was held in this year, and what a beautiful facility it was. It's clean, neat, and convenient layout may have contributed to the general atmosphere of what seemed to be a contented, happy gathering of comic book lovers spending time (and money) celebrating this vital and uniquely American art form.

As for Dark Horse, well... we were swamped by tons of people at our booth for four days straight! It was great seeing old friends, making new ones, and listening to readers tell us what they like and don't like about our comics and various products. Our booth was filled with large art displays from many of our future projects and was topped off by our new pal, Andy, a life-size **Alien** complete with oozing teeth and all! **Randy Stradley** put together an impressive schedule of writers and artists to sign at our booth including **Frank Miller, Geof Darrow, Dave Gibbons, Mark Verheiden, Matt Wagner, Dan Barry, James Robinson, Paul Chadwick,** and **Phill Norwood**, to name a few.

For me, Saturday was the most hectic day as I was up at 8:30 a.m., at the con by 10:00 a.m. and began coordinating a massive signing by **Dave Gibbons, Frank Miller,** and **Geof Darrow.** At 1:00 p.m. we were attending the prestigious **Eisner Awards** where **Paul Chadwick** won for ***Concrete: Earth Day,*** **Frank Miller** and **Dave Gibbons** won for ***Give Me Liberty,*** and **Miller** and **Darrow** won for ***Hard Boiled!*** With little time for celebration we were off to our one hour "What's up at the Dark Horse Corral" panel where the aforementioned and others discussed their past, present, and future projects for the company. **Geof Darrow** had 'em rolling in the isles with his deadpan delivery, while others expressed their feelings on issues such as creator ownership and censorship. Later that night, I was off to attend the annual **Inkpot Awards**, where **Dan *(Flash Gordon/Indiana Jones)* Barry** was awarded a "Lifetime Achievement" Inkpot.

All in all it was a great time, made all the more enjoyable by the great con committee, **Fae Desmond, John Rogers, Jackie Estrada, Janet Tait, Dave Scroggy, Robin Doig, Clydene Nee,** to name a few, and all the fine volunteers who work so hard and make it look so easy! Thanks to everyone who had a hand in making it all come together so successfully. I would also like to thank a good friend of mine who bought me a double Meyers and Coke at the end of a very long day when I *really* needed it! You took good care of me, Blood! Thanks!!

If you're not already making plans for next year's **San Diego Comic Con**, you're downright goofy! Get on the stick, it's worth it. Next year it's being held from August 20th through 24th at the San Diego Convention Center and you can write to the San Diego Comic Con, P.O. Box 128458, San Diego, CA, 92112-8458.

Just trying to recuperate,

Bob Schreck

Mike Richardson • publisher

Neil Hankerson • vice-president of operations

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Steven Birch, Cary Grazzini, Ray Gruen, Carolyn Megyesi, Forrest Norvell, Jack Pollock, Steve Posey, Monty Sheldon, Sean Tierney • production

Tiffany Schlobohm • receptionist

CHECKLIST

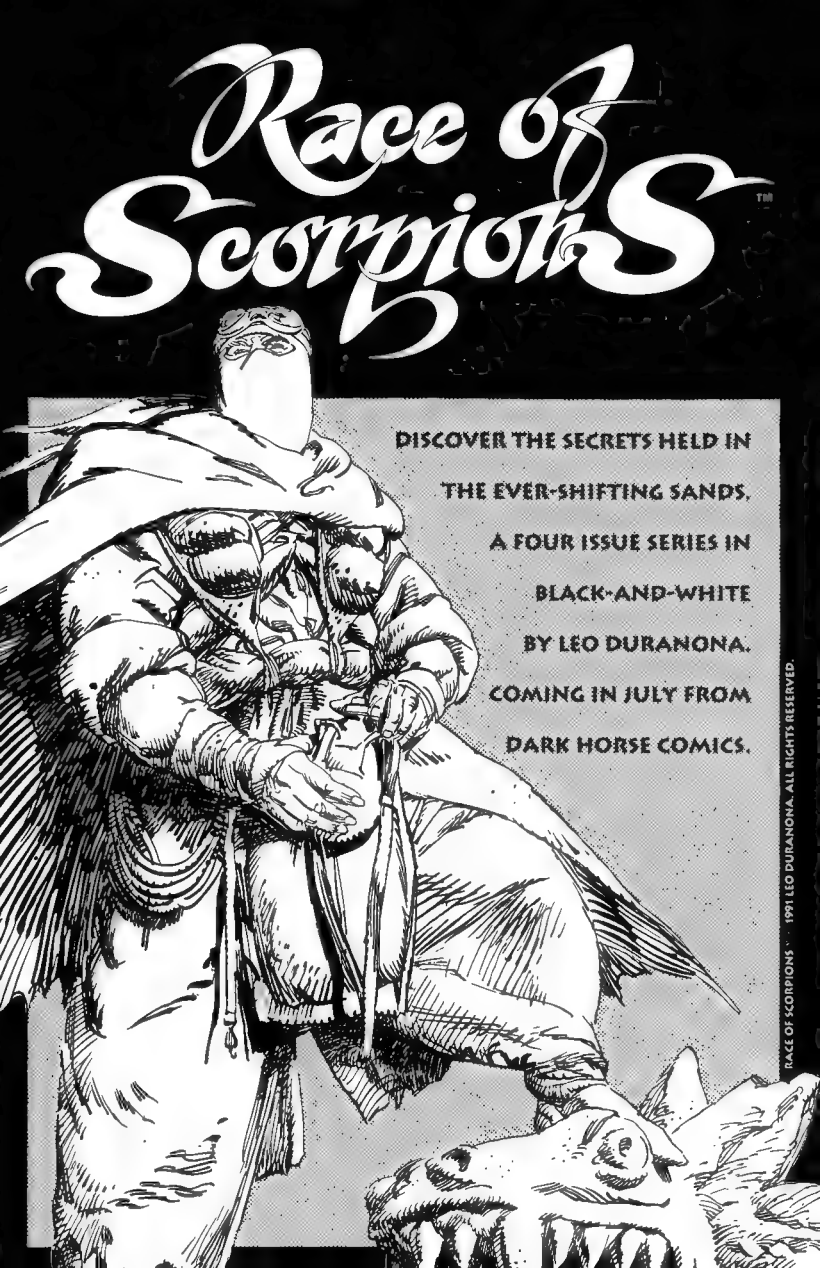
☐ **SHIPPING OCTOBER 1**
Dark Horse Presents #55
Flaming Carrot #27
Venus Wars #7
Terminator Secondary Objective #4

☐ **SHIPPING OCTOBER 8**
Cheval Noir #23
Race of Scorpions II #4
Predator Cold War #2

☐ **SHIPPING OCTOBER 15**
Billi 99 #2
Badlands #4

☐ **SHIPPING OCTOBER 22**
Almuric #2

☐ **SHIPPING OCTOBER 29**
The Mask #3


Race of Scorpions™
DISCOVER THE SECRETS HELD IN
THE EVER-SHIFTING SANDS.
A FOUR ISSUE SERIES IN
BLACK-AND-WHITE
BY LEO DURANONA.
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CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS

OF EXCELLENCE

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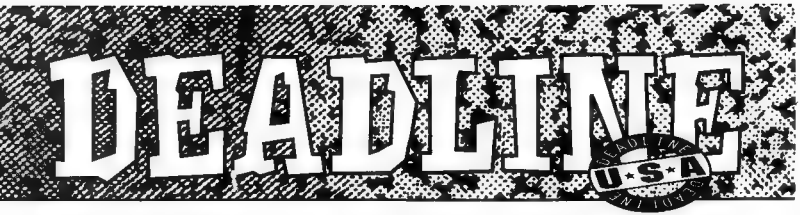
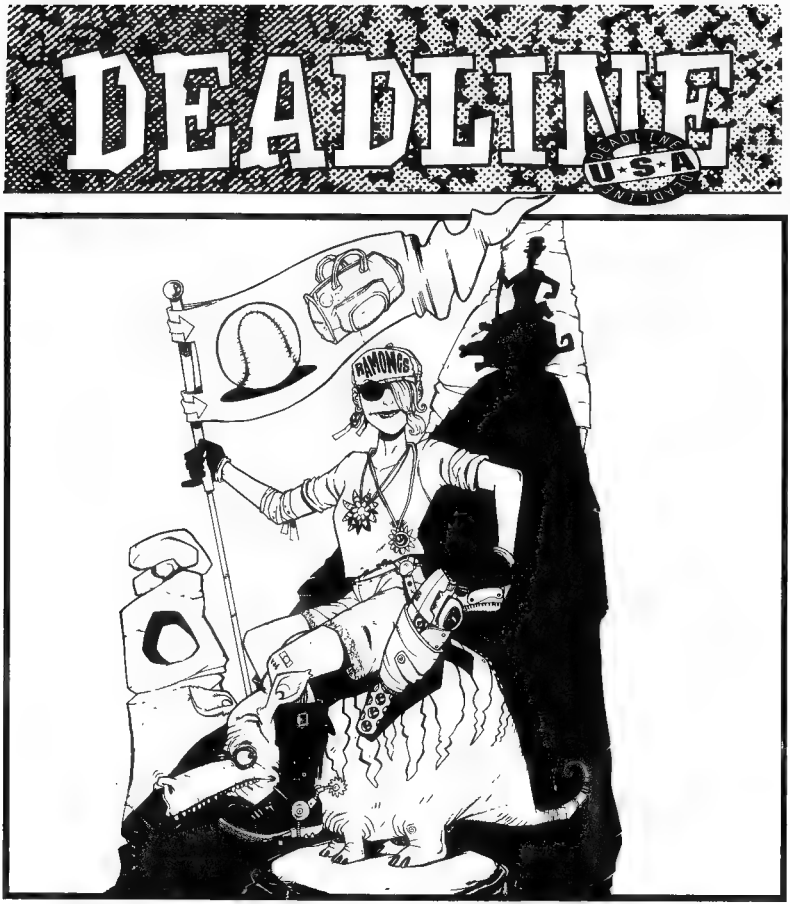


F E A T U R I N G:

TANK GIRL (NOT TO MENTION BOOGA, SUB GIRL, JET GIRL & CAMP KOALA) BY JAMIE HEWLETT & ALAN MARTIN • THIRTEEN O'CLOCK BY RICHARD SALA • SILENCE BY ALEC STEVENS • TALES OF THE A-MEN BY SHAKY KANE • JOHNNY NEMO BY BRETT EWINS & PETE MILLIGAN • WIRED WORLD BY PHILIP BOND • BOX CITY BY RACHEL BALL • I WAS A SEX SLAVE SECRETARY BY JULIE HOLLINGS • YOUNG KAFKA BY BRIAN IVERSON • PLUS: ATOMIC BABY, GWAR & MUCH MORE! CUTTING EDGE COMICS FROM AROUND THE WORLD IN A 96-PAGE DELUXE FORMAT BOOK WITH TANK GIRL ON THE COVER! DEADLINE U.S.A. #1 IS A ONE-WAY TICKET TO A SWINGIN' APOCALYPSE!



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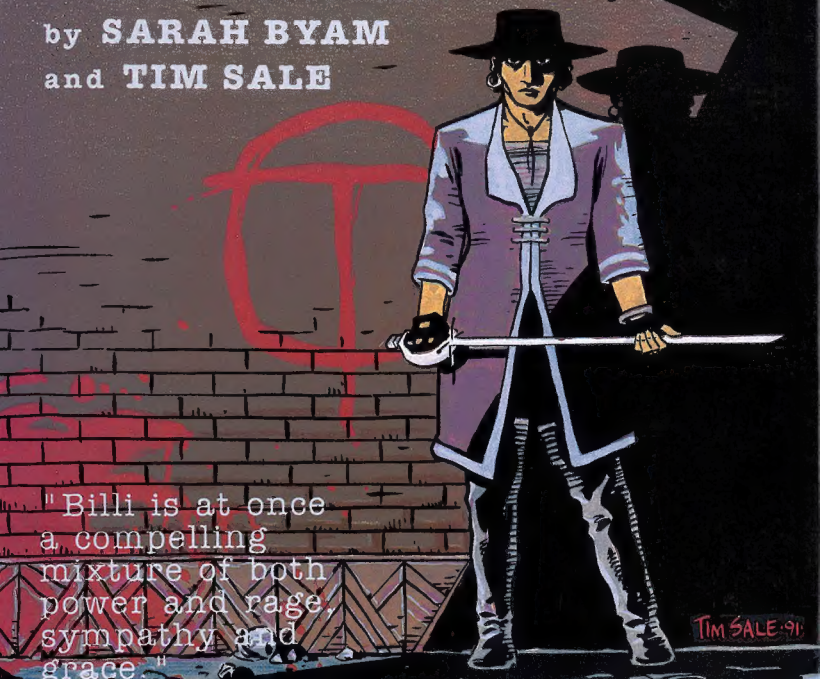

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